

TEN NO-BRAINER STEPS TO BECOMING A DAILY ARTS ADVOCATE

From A Bunch of Arts Workers Just Sitting Around Brainstorming

1. Go to <http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/yourleg.html> and type in your zip code. Get the names and addresses of your representatives and put them on your mailing list. Make sure they get your flyers, postcards and requests for annual donor support.
2. When you learn about an issue or a piece of legislative action, put it in your programs, your newsletter, on your website and/or on handouts in your lobby.
3. Tell your board of directors, your favorite donors and your artists what you think about any issue you become aware of. (This is conversation, not lobbying.)
4. Add as a final item to every meeting agenda, "Does anyone know anything that's going on in the legislature/city council/school board that we should be aware of?"
5. Steal or adapt information from other organizations' materials if they are a few steps ahead of you on the information ladder.
6. Coordinate advocacy with other groups. Build a coalition of arts advocates. (This one speaks for itself.)
7. If you can't make it to local political events or hearings, get a report about what happened.
8. If you make a curtain pitch or other live pitch for donations, mention any action you might be taking and let your audience know how they can take action. If you want them to make phone calls or write letters, have the numbers available.
9. Provide sample letters or emails or talking points for people you are asking to do something specific.
10. Remember that every conversation about your work is an opportunity to change the way your work is perceived. Be passionate, be informed and be unapologetic.

The Arts Create Jobs, Tax Revenues, Economic Vitality

The arts industry employs a significant number of people. In addition, a large amount of employment is generated indirectly by businesses including everything from print shops to restaurants whose ultimate customers are arts organizations or their employees. Artists are also employers of other people. Artists spend money on supplies, materials, equipment, machinery, services, travel, education, wardrobe and other work-related needs. All this economic activity results in significant state and local spending, taxes and community health and vitality.

FACTS

- **Jobs:** The arts and culture industry supports **400,000 full time equivalent jobs in California**. California has more artists than any other state
- **Economic activity:** This industry **generates \$16.75 billion in annual economic activity** in California (not including artists and the entertainment industry): **\$6.65 billion** in spending by arts organizations (as employers and consumers); and **\$10.1 billion** in event related spending by audiences
- **State taxes:** This industry **generates \$830 million in state income**
- There are an estimated **10,000 public benefit (nonprofit) arts organizations in California**. State and local governments benefit from individual income tax paid by employees of these 10,000 businesses.
- **Tourism: The Arts & Culture sector of the tourism industry tops \$17 billion. One out of every four dollars spent on tourism is spent on a cultural event.**
- **Creative industries: The entertainment and high tech industries are two of the primary economic engines that drive California's economy.** Commercial television, film, recording and high-tech industries benefit from the ways in which public benefit arts organizations develop and allow creative employment for artists from set designers to graphic artists, from theater managers to lighting technicians to software programmers – the arts fill the job pool.
- **Downtown vitalization: Many cities in the nation have included the arts and culture as central to their downtown redevelopment and revitalization**, making city centers pedestrian-friendly magnets for music, theater, dance and the visual arts, dining and entertainment, and public festivals. The heart of a city brings people together and encourages the mix of cultural lifestyles. A lively downtown enhances the image of a community and attracts visitors. check out [\[http://www.glendaleca.com/redev_faq.asp\]](http://www.glendaleca.com/redev_faq.asp)
- **Cultural Districts:** As anchors for downtown redevelopment, a cultural district serves as a well-known, labeled, mixed-use area with a concentration of cultural attractions. Check out: http://www.americansforthearts.org/issues/comdev/comdev_article.asp?id=209

The Public Value of the Arts

The arts create public value by increasing educational, social, civic or economic capital for communities. Former NEA Chair, John Frohmyer once said, "*Creativity is the currency of the future.*" **In many ways, the arts are the R&D of the creative ecosystem that underpins much of California's economic health and vibrancy.**

FACTS

- In his book, *The Rise of the Creative Class and How It's Transforming Work, Leisure, Community and Everyday Life*, Carnegie Mellon University professor of Economic Development Dr. Richard Florida states: "*The bottom line is that cities need a people climate even more today than they need a business climate. This means supporting creativity across the board--in all of its various facets and dimensions--and building a community that is attractive to creative people, not just to high-tech companies. As former Seattle mayor Paul Schell once said, success lies in 'creating a place where the creative experience can flourish.'* Instead of subsidizing companies, stadiums and retail centers, communities need to be open to diversity and invest in the kinds of lifestyle options and amenities people really want. In fact, you cannot be a thriving high-tech center if you don't do this." (The Rise of the Creative Class, Florida, p. 283)
- **California ranks highly in Florida's list of creative cities;** San Francisco (1), San Diego (3), Los Angeles (12) and Sacramento (22) are among the leading areas in the country. Naturally the arts, along with science, are at the forefront in building creative capital.
- **If California stops investing in creativity, we will be surpassed by other regions of the country and by regions outside of the United States.**
- **The arts are an integral form of cultural expression that leads to validating identity and citizenship,** thus legitimizing, for many communities, the struggle to enfranchise themselves. Cultural citizenship is about claiming and expanding the rights in the community that stand for social change, diversity and institutional reform. Participation in civil, political, and social arenas is a natural example of cultural citizenship.
- **Cultural diversity is a valued asset.** The state is often called the most diverse place on the planet. The arts build cultural bridges, contribute towards cross-cultural understanding, strengthen the association between identity and citizenship, and enhance the quality of life.
- **Building cultural bridges through the arts makes California stronger and wiser for its diversity, both internationally and at home** Cultural diversity can increase understanding among peoples, making us whole and strong. Left unattended, it can be a dividing force creating suspicion and resentment. It is through the arts that we bridge these gaps, and cross real and imaginary borders that prevent us from reaching our highest potential.

The Role of Arts in Education

Arts education helps build academic skills, increases academic performance, improves test scores, improves behavior, reaches kids at risk of dropping out of school, improves self-esteem and builds the kind of creative skills that are required of people in the workforce of the new century. **In a public opinion survey conducted by the California Arts Council, 100% of the random sample of 593 parents stated that the arts should be part of every child's school experience.**

FACTS

- **Arts Enhance Learning:** Numerous major studies show that learning and achievement are improved when the arts are an integral part of students' school and after/school experience. Engagement in the arts nurtures the development of cognitive, social, and personal competencies.
- **Process of Discovery:** The arts encourage learning as a process of discovery that engages the whole child – body, mind and heart -- in exploration and problem solving.
- **Language and Literacy:** Research powerfully details the effective use of drama in preschool and early grades as a technique for teaching and motivating children to develop higher-order language and literacy skills.
- **Arts Help Teachers Teach:** Studies of older children show that drama improves reading skills, persuasive writing ability, narrative writing skills, and children's self-conceptions as learners and readers.
- **Higher SAT Scores:** Students with four years of study in the arts scored higher on their SATs. In 1995, for example, SAT scores were 59 points higher on the verbal and 44 points higher on the mathematics portion than students with no course work in the arts.
- **Integrated curriculum & Test Scores:** At Los Angeles County's Fairgrove Academy, a K-8 school of 890 students, arts in the curriculum raised API scores from 480 to 670.
- **Attendance:** Attendance almost always goes up when arts are part of the curriculum, and remains stable.
- **Theater & At-Risk Youth:** Los Angeles Theater of Hearts provides at-risk students a theater curriculum exploring and building art skills through storytelling, to elevate self-esteem and encourage positive life goals. Expanded Artists in Schools programs for 289 high-risk youth at seven Alternative and Camp schools had these results: grades increased from 10% to 80%; attendance increased 80%; teamwork increased 100%.
- **Brain Development:** In musicians who started training in early childhood, the neural bridge that links the brain's hemispheres, called the corpus callosum, is up to 15% larger. A professional musician's auditory cortex - the part of the brain associated with hearing - contains 130% more gray matter than that of non-musicians.

SAMPLE News Release

For Immediate Release

DATE

Contact: CONTACT NAME

Telephone #

Day of Event CELL #

Local Leaders Discuss the Value of Arts and Culture at Community Forum *Public Invited to Attend Free Event on (DATE)*

(CITY) – In a dramatic step to highlight the economic, educational, and social impact of arts and culture in California’s communities, the (NAME of ORGANIZATION) today announced that it is hosting an “Arts Forum” meeting at (DATE and TIME) at the (PLACE).

The effort is part of a statewide push to hold public meetings all over the state. To date, Marin, Pasadena, Santa Clara, San Francisco, Sacramento, and Oakland have scheduled community events. With support from the California Arts Council, the (NAME of ORGANIZATION) is one of many groups recognizing the importance and value of the arts to their neighborhoods and holding a forum. The purpose of the “Arts Forum” is to generate public awareness, mobilize supporters, and address cultural issues of local concern. Organizers have been active in inviting local elected officials, arts leaders, community members, and members of the news media. Those already confirmed include: (NAMES).

“The arts simply make our communities better places to live and work and provide a vital component to our kids’ education. As the state faces huge cuts to arts funding, it is critical to host an event which addresses the needs and challenges for California’s future,” said Arts Forum coordinator (NAME)

For more information, go to (ORGANIZATION’S WEBSITE) or www.cac.ca.gov

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SAMPLE STORY

Create your own story for your newsletter, e-mail list or programs

El Pacifico art and civic leaders

Meet to discuss arts funding

Public invited to take part, identify

Strategies, actions to support arts

Imagination Repertory Theatre will be the setting for a community meeting Thursday, April 29 at 6 pm in response to the crisis in arts funding for California arts organizations and schools. How are these massive cuts from virtually all traditional funding sources affecting El Pacifico residents? What is the impact on the community and local schools? What collective actions can we take to improve the situation?

Arts organizations in the El Pacifico region, artists, board members, volunteers, the PTA, teachers, business leaders, city government, elected officials, the media and the public are invited to attend this critically important meeting. The goal is to share information and discuss actions to restore public funding. Following last year's cuts, California now ranks last in the nation in public funding for the arts at 3-cents per capita per year.

Sara Smith, associate director at Imagination Rep, is spearheading the local effort. Says Smith: "We want to encourage public dialogue about how the arts improve life for our residents and our local community, and how the arts bolster the local economy, creating jobs and improving the academic performance of our kids. We need to educate and inform the arts field and the wider public about the current crisis. I'm convinced if we work together, we can make a difference."

Mark Jacob, president of the El Pacifico Chamber of Commerce and owner of Jacob Brothers Ford, points out, "The Legislature reduced public funding for the arts by 94 percent. Yes, California has a fiscal crisis, but the arts are an economic engine we can't afford to lose. For one thing, arts and tourism are this region's lifeblood. This hurts the local economy; I fear we'll lose jobs. Nobody can tell me the arts aren't vital to this community. And what about the kids in our schools? Art helps them learn and keeps them interested in school."

The California Arts Council (CAC) has a community action toolkit and information on its Web site, www.cac.ca.gov/. The CAC also has a section on its site where people can sign up to organize meetings like the one we are having April 29.

So join with us. Invite your friends and neighbors to this important meeting. The arts are a valuable asset in our community, worth fighting for. Your voice counts. Come and share your views and ideas.

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Organizing a local Arts Forum:

WHY?

1. Creates the opportunity for networking of the local arts community, and for media coverage of the value of the arts – economically, educationally, civically and otherwise.
2. Allows for consensus building as to strategies to deal with local issues.
3. Involves locally elected officials in addressing the problems.
4. Creates the opportunity to involve strategic partners – the education community, the travel industry, local government and others.
5. Provides the opportunity for collaboration.

HOW TO DO IT IN FOUR EASY STEPS:

1. **PICK A DATE AND TIME** – preferably before June 1st. Don't worry, no date is good for everyone. Just make sure you don't conflict with something major already scheduled.
2. **PICK A LOCATION** – big enough to hold your anticipated group, centrally located or easy to find, with plenty of parking. Lots of theaters, museums etc. will donate their space.
3. **GET THE WORD OUT** – print up a flyer, put in your newsletter, send out email invitations, post on websites, call around and spread the word. Involve people in the planning and they will help you insure the event is well attended. Once you have the arts community on board, hold a brief telephone conference call to set an agenda, send a press release and divvy up who makes the calls to the media, elected officials, teachers etc.
4. **FOLLOW UP WITH THE MEDIA /AND ELECTED OFFICIALS** – make thank you phone calls, send out a press release with actions that were decided upon, schedule visits with officials for further discussion

Advocacy

- Checklist -

Who to contact with letters, phone calls, personal visits.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mayor | <input type="checkbox"/> Rotary, Kiwanis, Elks, etc. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> City Council | <input type="checkbox"/> League of Women Voters |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Board of Supervisors | <input type="checkbox"/> Clergy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> City Services Dept. Head | <input type="checkbox"/> Media |
| <input type="checkbox"/> School Superintendent | <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper |
| <input type="checkbox"/> PTA President | <input type="checkbox"/> Television |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher Representative | <input type="checkbox"/> Radio |
| <input type="checkbox"/> School Board Rep | <input type="checkbox"/> Convention/Visitor's Bureau |
| <input type="checkbox"/> University/State/Community College Rep | <input type="checkbox"/> Travel Industry |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chamber of Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Galleries |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate Leaders | <input type="checkbox"/> Arts Patrons |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Board of Realtors | <input type="checkbox"/> Artists |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Local Foundations | <input type="checkbox"/> State Assembly Representative |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Librarian | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Staff person |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Local Arts Groups | <input type="checkbox"/> State Senator |
| (Theaters, dance companies, film groups, etc.) | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Staff person |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Museums | <input type="checkbox"/> U.S. Congress Representative |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Police Chief | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Civic Groups | |